

**(Matt. 10:5-6)** - In the great commission, the Lord commanded His disciples to go *“into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature”* (Mark 16:15), because God’s elect, the redeemed of the Lord, are found in every nation of the world (Rev. 5:9; 14:6). The blessing of Abraham, which is salvation by God’s grace in and by the Lord Jesus Christ, would include a particular people out of *“all families of the earth”* (Gen. 12:3) without distinction, both Jew and Gentile. Initially, however, the apostles were sent, two by two, on a special assignment only *“TO THE LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL,”* God’s elect among the Jews. This is what Paul meant when, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he wrote, *“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; TO THE JEW FIRST, and also to the Greek”* (Rom. 1:16). Christ specifically told them, *“GO NOT INTO THE WAY OF THE GENTILES, AND INTO ANY CITY OF THE SAMARITANS ENTER YE NOT.”* In His sovereign wisdom and purpose, it was God’s plan to bring the Messiah into the world and initiate the spread of the Gospel through a sinful, weak, and despised people (Deut. 7:6-9). Through this rebellious people, God showed how salvation is not for those who are worthy but for sinners whom He had chosen to save by His grace through the Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 9:13-16). God is absolutely sovereign in salvation, and salvation is by God’s grace through the righteousness of Christ (Rom. 9:31–10:4).

It is also important for us to keep in mind that not all individuals who were members of the physical nation of Israel were also members of the spiritual nation of Israel (Rom. 2:28-29; 9:6-8). *“LOST SHEEP OF THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL”* refers specifically to God’s elect scattered throughout the physical nation. God’s elect, both Jew and Gentile, by nature are all as sheep who gone astray and have turned to our own ways. But before the world began, God chose us in Christ and *“laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* (Isa. 53:6), i.e. His sheep for whom He died and was raised again (John 10:11,14). These lost sheep, all over the world, in each generation, both Jew and Gentile, will be found by the Lord and brought into the kingdom of God through God-sent witnesses preaching the Gospel in the power of the Holy Spirit.

**(Matt. 10:7)** - *“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND”* - The specific message given these men was the same as John the Baptist and the Lord Himself preached. The apostles did not create this message nor was it their ideas and opinions. They were sent to deliver the Lord’s message of truth. Christ told them where to go and what to say. This message first declares the truth of the King Himself - the true Messiah, the Savior of His people Who has come as foretold by the prophets. This King is both God and man in one Person as declared in the Old Testament. He must be so in order to accomplish His mission - to save His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21,23; Dan. 9:24). This message was that the Messiah had come to establish a spiritual and eternal kingdom, which is salvation and eternal life by God’s grace, not an earthly kingdom. It was to be a kingdom whose subjects were sinners saved by grace and not attained or entered by the works and wills of men (Rom. 9:30–10:4). It would be a kingdom of righteousness established by the justice satisfying blood of Christ as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of His people (Jer. 23:5-6; 33:15-16). The way by which sinners would be brought into and preserved within this kingdom is by almighty, irresistible, conquering grace (Psa. 110:3; John 6:37-45).

**(Matt. 10:8)** - As we have seen, these men were given special gifts to perform miracles by the power of God so as to prove the validity and authority of their message (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:4). *“FREELY YE HAVE RECEIVED, FREELY GIVE”* - They were told not to charge a fee for the gifts they were given. The power to work miracles did not originate with them, so they were

not to take any credit for themselves or seek any reward for performing them. Recall how an evil man named Simon sought to buy and sell these gifts (Acts 8:18-24). Whenever men sought to worship the apostles due to the miracles, the true disciples of Christ rejected this worship and taught those who sought to do so the truth (ex. Acts 14:8-18). How contrary to this command of Christ are the charlatans of our day who falsely claim to have the gift of healing and become rich preying on the sick and their families under the guise of being able to cure diseases. This is why we must always listen to their message and judge righteously that if they come preaching another gospel, they are cursed, not blessed, of God (Gal. 1:6-9).

**(Matt. 10:9-10)** - The Lord's true servants are not greedy men who are in the ministry for the money. They are not hirelings (John 10:12-13). Preachers of the Gospel, however, are to live by the offerings of the people of God whenever it is possible for a congregation to support them in full-time ministry (Luke 10:7; 1 Cor. 9:1; 1 Tim. 5:17-18). If a congregation does not have the ability to support a pastor full time, then it is fine for him to work outside the ministry to support himself. **"FOR THE WORKMAN IS WORTHY OF HIS MEAT"** - Those who are blessed to be in full-time ministry are to give their time to study the Word, preaching the true Gospel of God's grace in Christ, and prayer.

**(Matt. 10:11-13a)** - **"WHO IN IT IS WORTHY."** Worthiness here does not mean people who are worthy of the grace of God or salvation. By nature, no sinner is worthy of God's blessings (Rom. 3:10-23). Salvation is by God's grace in Christ, and it is for the unworthy. Christ came into the world to save sinners. As sinners saved by God's grace, we recognize and freely admit that our only worthiness is Christ and the merits of His righteousness alone (Rev. 5). Worthiness here can only mean two things: (1) It refers to those who were providentially prepared by God to receive these men and listen to their message, as well as offer them support by way of food and lodging. The gathering of Christ's sheep into the kingdom of God involves the providential workings of God to bring them into contact with the Gospel (Rom. 6:17-18). (2) It refers to God giving them a general disposition to be open to hearing the disciples and to be charitable and generous to meet their needs. **"LET YOUR PEACE COME UPON IT"** - This is not speaking peace to unbelievers who have never heard nor believed the Gospel of peace with God in Christ. Christ's witnesses are forbidden to do this (2 John 9-11). This was a form of greeting to express their desire for those who received them - "Peace be upon this house." This involved simply entering the house, dwelling with those within peacefully, and preaching the Gospel to them.

**(Matt. 10:13b-14)** - **"BUT IF IT BE NOT WORTHY"** - However, if they seek to enter a house that totally rejects them and their message, one where they are not welcome but spurned, **"LET YOUR PEACE RETURN TO YOU"** - This was to hold back the greeting of "peace be upon this house." All true believers know that apart from Christ as He is identified and distinguished in the Gospel of peace, there is no possibility of peace with God. **"SHAKE THE DUST OFF YOUR FEET"** means to leave and go elsewhere. We are never to try to force ourselves or our message on those who turn us away. We can (and should) pray for them, i.e. that God would bring them to hear the Gospel, but we must not try to force the issue.

**(Matt. 10:15)** - There is no worse state for a sinner than to be found having heard the Gospel of God's grace through Christ and left on his/her own to reject it (1 Cor. 2:14). As wicked as were the cities of **"SODOM AND GOMORRHA,"** it is a much greater punishment to have had the light of the Gospel and to have rejected it. To reject the Gospel is to cast aspersion upon every attribute of God's nature as revealed in the glorious Person and finished work of Christ to save His people from their sins.